



United States Department of Agriculture

GRASSLAND CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

GCI

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Grassland Conservation Initiative Activity

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop, Pasture, Range

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: One Priority Resource Concern

CONSERVATION ACTIVITY LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Conservation Activity Description

The Grassland Conservation Initiative Activity assists participants in maintaining land enrolled in the initiative in permanent vegetative cover to meet or exceed at least one of the following priority resource concerns: Soil Erosion, Soil Quality Degradation, Water Quality Degradation, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement, Air Quality Impacts, Degraded Plant Condition, and/or Livestock Production Limitation.

Criteria

- Manage and control the establishment and/or spread of invasive species. Enrolled lands must not become a major seed source for noxious weeds.
- Maintain enrolled land in permanent vegetative cover which may include grass, early successional, or non-invasive species.
- Manage the land to meet or exceed the NRCS planning criteria for the identified priority resource concern(s) as required through the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH).

Additional Considerations:

- Criteria and considerations from the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) may be used to assist the participant in meeting the selected priority resource concern:
 - If enrolled land is grazed, Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) may be used to maintain or improve grasslands by matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demands of the livestock to maintain adequate vegetative cover.
 - If enrolled land is cut or mowed, Forage Harvest Management (CPS 511) may be used to ensure forage will be harvested at a frequency and height that optimizes the desired forage stand, plant community and stand life while maintaining vegetative cover. Mowing and harvest operations should be

completed outside of the reproductive period where wildlife species are a concern.

- Prescribed Burning (CPS 338), Brush Management (CPS 314) or Herbaceous Weed Treatment (CPS 315) may be used when needed to improve the amount of plant biomass while maintaining vegetative cover and/or to manage and control the establishment and spread of invasive species.
- If enrolled land needs cover or productivity improvements, Range Planting (CPS 550) or Forage and Biomass Planting (CPS 512) may be used to assist the participant in establishing or improving vegetative cover.

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Determine the priority resource concern to be met or exceeded by the end of the GCI contract.
- Identify any management actions needed to address the priority resource concern, including control of invasive species.
- Provide documentation of management actions taken as requested by NRCS.
- Take photos annually of enrolled land showing vegetative cover is maintained.
- Notify NRCS of any planned changes to the management of the enrolled land.

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation, assist the participant in identifying the priority resource concern they will meet or exceed through the GCI.
- Prior to implementation, assist the participant with determining whether any management or control of invasive species is needed.
- As needed and requested provide technical assistance to the participant.
- Review annual photos and any additional documentation provided to ensure that the participant has maintained the enrolled land in permanent vegetative cover and in accordance with the criteria identified above.

NRCS Documentation Review

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the enrolled acres meet the requirements of the Grassland Conservation Initiative.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date



INDIANA SUPPLEMENT TO GRASSLAND CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

GCI

Additional Criteria for INDIANA

In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet GCI the following additional criteria apply in Indiana:

- Noxious weeds will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Invasive species will be contained or controlled to prevent additional spread within the enrolled acres and will not dominate more than 50% of the enrolled acreage. See the [Indiana Biology Technical Note 9: Bio-Security Procedures for Preventing the Spread of Plant Pests](#) for the applicable list of biosecurity species for this criteria.
 - Note: If Degraded Plant Condition is selected as the priority resource concern, then invasive species coverage levels will meet Indiana Quality Criteria of less than 10% of the enrolled area.

Indiana Priority Resource Concerns:

- **Soil Erosion** – No gullies; sheet/rill \leq T.
- **Soil Quality Degradation** – Positive SCI.
- **Water Quality Degradation** – Soil has a minimum of 40% cover from plant residue and 70% live leaf canopy OR a PCS score of 30 points or higher.
- **Degraded Plant Condition** – Desirable species make up at least 50% of the stand. – invasive species managed to less than 10% of the land unit.
- **Livestock Production Limitation** – Stop grazing/harvest height is at or above the 528 standard (4 inches for cool-season species; 6 inches for warm season species).